

An examination on the merits is requested.

Respectfully submitted,


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Technical Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to the general art of surgery, and to the particular field of introducing material to a patient for therapeutic or diagnostic purposes, most specifically, the invention relates to NO therapy.

The present application is a divisional application of co-pending Application Serial Number 09/688,329 filed on 10/16/2000.

Background of the Invention

The use of therapeutic gases to treat a human or animal patient has been known in the art for many years. A number of different gases may be added to a respiratory gas that is inhaled by a spontaneously breathing, non-ventilated patient. These gases may be used to achieve some therapeutic effect, service a diagnostic function or have some other desirable purpose. Such gases will be referred to herein as "therapeutic gases." One skilled in the delivery of therapeutic gas will understand that the disclosure can be used to teach either human or animal patients. Accordingly, no limitation to human is intended by references to patient in this disclosure.

One therapeutic gas is nitric oxide (NO), which is administered by inhalation in low concentrations to treat primary or secondary pulmonary hypertension or other diseases. In many cases, nitric oxide or other therapeutic gases come from a high concentration source such as a high concentration compressed gas cylinder. The gas source may be pure or may contain some concentration of therapeutic gas in a carrier gas. There may also be cases where more than one therapeutic gas is used, with or

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